Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application.

32. (currently amended) A process for the recovery of an organic acid ester from a fermentation broth comprising:

(a) drying said fermentation broth to obtain a dried product, wherein said drying occurs without prior removal of insolubles from said fermentation broth;

(b) adding said dried product (a) to a lower alcohol in the presence of an acid to obtain a free organic acid;

(c) esterifying the free organic acid to the corresponding ester; and

(d) removing insolubles to obtain a solution comprising an organic acid ester.

33-35. (cancelled)

36. (original) The process of claim 32, wherein at step (b) the concentration of said organic acid added to said lower alcohol is from about 50 g/L to about 100 g/L.

37. (original) The process of claim 32, wherein at step (a) the process for drying comprises spray drying said fermentation broth.

38. (original) The process of claim 32, wherein the reaction temperature at steps (b) and (c) is from about 25 °C to about 60 °C.

39. (original) The process of claim 32, wherein at step (b) said lower alcohol is selected from the group consisting of methanol, ethanol, propanol, butanol and glycol.

40. (original) The process of claim 32, wherein at step (b) about 1.2 equivalents of acid is added.

41. (original) The process of claim 32, wherein at step (b) said acid is selected from the group consisting of sulphuric acid, nitric acid, hydrobromic acid, hydrochloric acid and phosphoric acid.

42. (original) The process of claim 41, wherein at step (b) said acid is sulphuric acid.

43. (original) The process of claim 32, wherein at step (d) the process for removing insolubles comprises filtration.

44. (original) The process of claim 32, wherein said organic acid comprises lactic acid, 2-keto-L-gulonic acid, citric acid or gluconic acid.

45. (original) The process of claim 44, wherein said organic acid is 2-keto-L-gulonic acid.